RELAY: DISCOVERING NEW SPECIES

Relay is a long-term dance poetry project conceived by Margit Galanter in collaboration with many people and places, and particularly the urban valley between three Bay Area mountains (San Bruno, Tamalpais, and Diablo). Inspired by Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge and Kiki Smith's visual poem *Concordance*, Margit has been investigating the alchemy of language, movement, and landscape in a vivid artistic conversation.

Over the course of three years, Margit experimented with multiple phases of presentations, investigations, and their syntheses in an unfolding "relay." Some of the chapters of the larger project included home art research; early performance experiments with *Concordance* and dance; the construction of a poetry chapbook; study of tonality in movement and communication; walking conversations with people from various fields of practice; and a performance research tour. The material within this document primarily archives the final phase of ***Relay***, which was a series of interactive, processual, and performative presentations in the Bay Area in the spring of 2014. This chapter was called ***Relay: Discovering New Species***, and the PDF is a relic of that constellation.

CONTENTS:

~ Links (blog and video)
~ Performance Program
~ Photos
~ Some Writings on ***Relay: Discovering New Species***

Relay Links

RELAY WEBSITE + BLOG:
http://relaydance.wordpress.com/

Sample Post: One of the strands of inspiration for *Relay* is the image, material, and phenomenon of felt. Ever-spiralling, it enmeshes through overlapping strands of wool. What a great image to dance with, and what an image for the workings of life. Not to mention the term connotes the quality of lived, engaged experience: that which is felt [more…].

Link to all posts: http://relaydance.wordpress.com/posts/

CONCORDANCE,
IN THE VOICE OF MEI-MEI BERSSENBRUGGE:
http://www.kelseyst.com/listen/tag/mei-mei-berssenbrugge/

VIDEO LINKS:

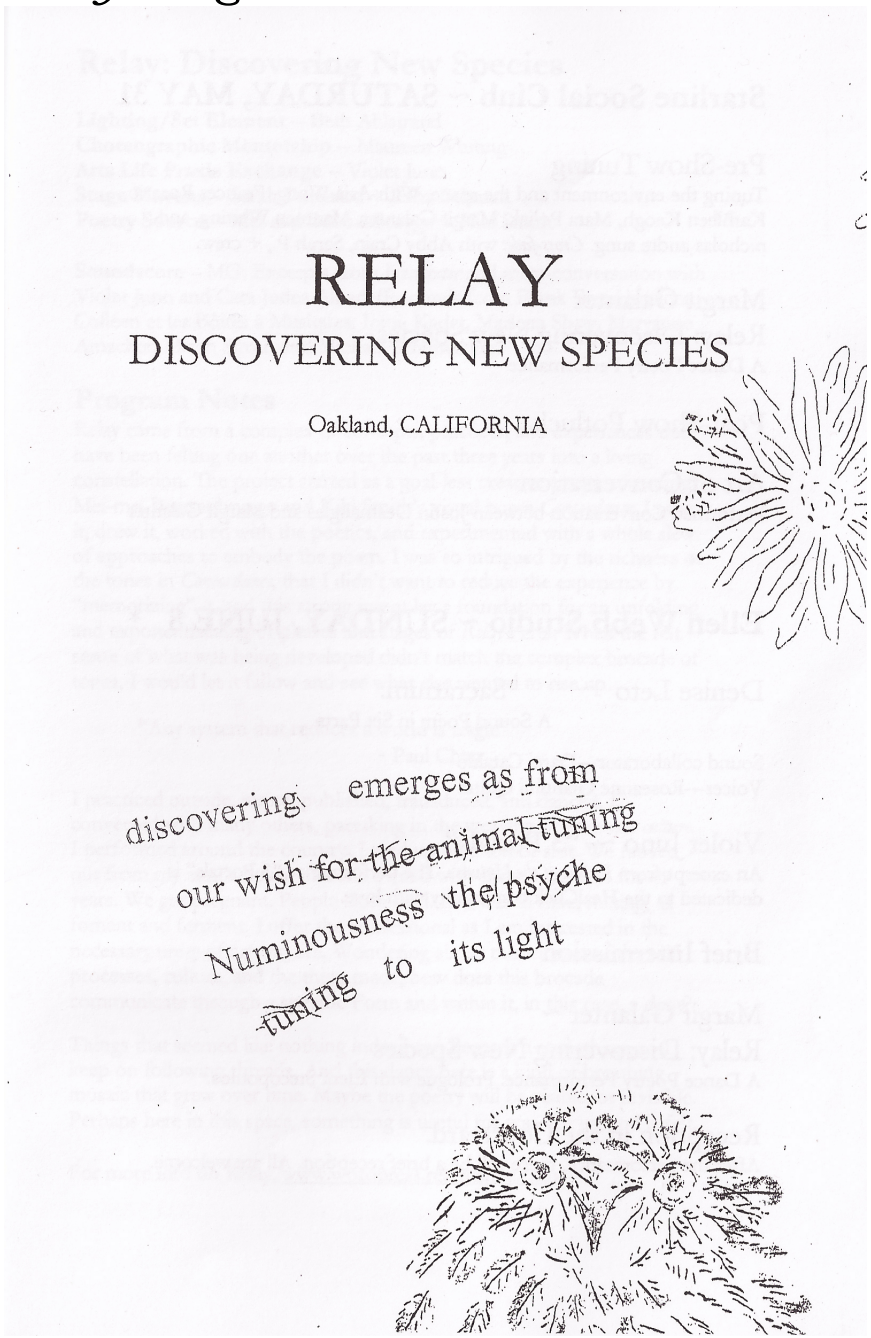
~ **Relay at the Starline:** https://vimeo.com/99999542,
Password: RelayStarlineSolo

~ **Relay MG Studio Solo:** https://vimeo.com/99376597,
Password: RelayStudioSolo

~ **Denise Leto Solo:** https://vimeo.com/99604210,
Password: RelayDeniseSolo

~ **Violet Juno Solo:** https://vimeo.com/99604209,
Password: RelayVioletSolo

Relay Program



Starline Social Club ~ SATURDAY, MAY 31

Pre-Show Tuning
Tuning the environment and the space. With Asia Wong, Frances Rosario, Kathleen Keogh, Mara Poliak, Margit Galanter, Maureen Whiting, and nicholas andre sung. *Cross-fade:* with Abby Crain, Sarah P., + crew.

Margit Galanter ~
Relay: Discovering New Species
A Dance Poetry Performance

Post-Show Potluck

Art of Conversation
Performed Conversation between Justin Desmangles and Margit Galanter

* * *

Ellen Webb Studio ~ SUNDAY, JUNE 8 *

Denise Leto ~ Sacrarium:
A Sound Poem in Six Parts

Sound collaborator---Darci Cataldo
Voicer---Roseanne Giannini Quinn

Violet Juno ~ "3 Portals"
An excerpt from *Fabric of the Universe*. The performance "3 Portals" is dedicated to the HealClick community with love.

Brief Intermission

Margit Galanter ~
Relay: Discovering New Species
A Dance Poetry Performance. Prologue with Eleni Stecopoulos.

Reception in the Courtyard.
After the performance, there will be a brief reception. All are welcome.

RELAY: DISCOVERING NEW SPECIES

Lighting/Set Element -- Beth Ahlstrand
Choreographic Mentorship -- Maureen Whiting
Arts Life Praxis Exchange -- Violet Juno
Stage Mavens -- Sarah Pritchard + Raha Behnam
Poetry Source -- Mei-mei Berssenbrugge + Kiki Smith

Soundscore – MG. Excerpts from *Encounter* and meta-conversation with Violet Juno and Cara Judea Alhadeff; sounds from Frank Bretschneider, Colleen et les Bôites à Musiques, Ioioi, Kadet, Marlena Shaw, Maryanne Amacher, Micah Silver, and Michael Schumacher.

Program Notes

Relay came from a complex of concepts, practices, and experiences that have been felting one another over the past three years into a living constellation. The project started as a goal-less creative practice; reading Mei-mei Berssenbrugge and Kiki Smith's visual poem *Concordance*, I sang it, drew it, worked with the poetics, and experimented with a whole slew of approaches to embody the poem. I was so intrigued by the richness of the tones in *Concordance*, that I didn't want to reduce the experience by "memorizing" it, and this strong intent lay a foundation for an unfolding and exponentializing of phases and stages of *Relay*'s arts. When the felt sense of what was being developed didn't match the complex brocade of tones, I would let it fallow and see what else wanted to rise up…

"Any system that reduces a world is tragic"
- Paul Chan

I practiced outside, wrote, published, transduced, and danced. I conversed with many others, partaking in the weaving of *movement culture*. I performed around the country. I read up on a ton of shit. We moved out from my aunt's house that she owned with chosen families for 41 years. We got pregnant. People close died. Life was in here, mixing, as foment and ferment. I offer the confessional as I am interested in the necessary unity of art and life. Wondering about this mosaic of the self, processes, culture, and the thing made, how does this brocade communicate through a specific Form and within it, in this case, a *dance*?

Things that seemed like nothing indeed can become a something, so I keep on following threads. And this dance here is a kind of breathing mosaic that grew over time. Maybe the poetry will be visible, or invisible. Perhaps here in this space, something is useful for you, for us, and is felt.

For more info on Relay, www.wordpress.relaydance.com

Some Key Relay Terms (in Development)

Anchoring | Using an act or object to access presence in the given situation, in connection with the environment.

Conversation as Alchemy | The mysterious process that takes place through conversation – changing perception, connectivity, and state.

Cross-fade | An operation, in time or sensed in texture, in which multiple discourses, concepts, and forms shift into one another in the constellation.

Epigenesis | Each new thing can only arise from the foundation of the previous. As in embryology. It can also applied to learning and growth.

Felt | Both past participle and the material, as metaphor and phenomenon.

Reciprocal Illumination | A term that expresses how aspects of the whole grow in meaning through mutual relationship. In its coupling with *epigenesis,* the lineal lives along with the constellative (Humberto Maturana).

Shining, Glimmering | Looking for the things that glow, following these.

Transductions | When one form of art is enacted through another medium. Procedure of creative translation with wildly different outcomes.

Thirding | Beyond dialectic into multiplicity. Not this nor that, but rather, the thing that gets made amongst and with, a new species.

Threading "interrupted lines" | (from *Concordance*). As in lineage. That spaces offer a medium for composing, sensing, absorbing, and imagining. The disjunctive and the power of space, itself.

…and Texts

Concordance, Mei-mei Berssenbrugge + Kiki Smith

Felt: Fluxus, Joseph Beuys, and the Dalai Lama, Chris Thompson

The Origin of Humanness in the Biology of Love, Humberto Maturana Romesin + Gerda Verden-Zöller

Paul Chan: Selected Writings 2000 – 2014, George Baker + Eric Banks, eds.

Lines: A Brief History, Tim Ingold

Chris Marker, all of them

"Is Social Practice Gentrifying Community Arts?" Chris Lowe + Nato Thompson, presented by Creative Time. www.badatsports.com

Biographies of Primary Enactors

Margit Galanter (Performer, Project Instigator) is a movement investigator and dance poet living in Oakland, CA. As a cultural worker and conceptual artist dedicated to discourse, experimental practices, embodiment, vividness, and human relations, her work has taken place in many contexts. Her compositional interventions have been expressed through roles such as curator, dramaturge, teacher, community organizer, and friend. Margit is trained as a movement artist, Guild Certified Feldenkrais Practitioner, and Chinese energetic practitioner, and her practice, *Physical Intelligence*, encompasses her unique research perspective, helping people experience the innate clarity and vitality one can uncover through the potency of movement.

Most recently in the Bay Area, Margit collaborates with Abby Crain as *Art Workouts*, through which she spearheaded a festival for embodied language, called *Words and Deeds*. She collaborates with various local artists, including in dance/ sound with Kadet Kuhne, Tuning with Ray Chung, Feldenkrais-art dialogues with Neil Marcus and the group *Motor*, and dance poetry collaborations with Eleni Stecopoulos. SALTA and Art Workouts are currently working on OMNI**dance**, a collective space as part of a newly forming Oakland-based commons, the OMNI …Stay tuned!

Margit's work has been presented across the U.S and abroad, and her writing has been published through *Contact Quarterly*, *The Swedish Dance History Project*, *Conscious Dancer*, and with nicholas andre sung through n/a gallery's first monograph, *bonanza*. Margit just finished co-editing and writing in *Embodied Lives*, a book of thirty artists whose work have been influenced by seminal Javanese movement mentor Suprapto Suryodarmo, to be published later in June by Triarchy Press, U.K.

Denise Leto (June 8, Performer) is a poet and editor exploring different forms of media and performance. Recent work involved a collaboration with cellist/composer Joan Jeanrenaud and choreographer Cid Pearlman. Their cross-genre performance piece, *Your Body is Not a Shark*, examined embodied difference and disability through music, sound art, poetry, dance, and movement. Denise wrote the book of poems/libretto published by North Beach Press. Her collaborative chapbook with Amber DiPietra, *Waveform*, was published by Kenning Editions. She has been an artist in residence and fellow at Djerassi and presented her work at various venues including the Congress on Research and Dance Conference at UCLA, "Tactical Bodies, Embodied Poetics: Creative Strategies for Collaboration, Poetries, Movement and Music," "Emergent Communities in Contemporary Experimental Writing" at UC Santa Cruz;
and "Breaking Ranks: Human/Nature" at the Marin Headlands Center for the Arts. www.onecontuousword.wordpress.com.

Justin Desmangles (May 31, Conversation) is Chairman of the board of directors of the Before Columbus Foundation. He is the creator the critically acclaimed radio program, New Day Jazz, now in its thirteenth year. Described by Ishmael Reed as one of the most important young black intellectuals in America (C-Span, April 3, 2011), his poetry and journalism have appeared in Amerarcana, Black Renaissance Noire (NYU), Drumvoices Revue (SIUE), and Konch. He presently is collaborating with Roscoe Mitchell (Art Ensemble of Chicago), as librettist, for an opera on the life of poet Bob Kaufman.

Maureen Whiting (Choreographic Mentor + May 31, Tuning) is a choreographer, dancer, and mathematician newly based in Oakland. Since 1997, she and her company have created new choreographic works in Seattle at On the Boards, ACT Theatre (premiering "the myth series" at ACT in 2009), Seattle University (3-year residency), Velocity Dance, and Cornish College. Her work has been performed in Seattle, New York, Philadelphia and Europe. Maureen created film and video projects that were shown at Lincoln Center Library in New York (Dance on Camera), Seattle's Northwest Film Forum, and most recently released on Seattle *Women in Film* in 2008. She has performed with dance innovator Stephanie Skura and worked with Lisa Nelson's Tuning Scores. Maureen grew up a ballet dancer and graduated with a degree in Mathematics in 1989 from Smith College and she currently teaches mathematics. Inspired by the rawness and beauty of life Maureen seeks to deepen audience experience of performing arts and aims to create a rich visual, kinesthetic world that describes and amplifies human experience. www.maureenwhitingco.org.

Violet Juno (Art Exchange + June 8, Performer) creates transdisciplinary performance often combining storytelling with sculptural props, movement, drawing, mapping, and sound. Juno has performed and exhibited at over 70 venues in 34 cities including including MOMA, PS1 and PS122 in New York, Diverse Works in Houston, Banff Centre for the Arts in Alberta, Canada, and Center for Contemporary Art in Glasgow, Scotland. She also performs in the sound performance duo RED VIXA and creates site-specific performance in unusual urban and natural environments. Her work explores the transformative body and the tension between language and languagelessness. Juno's belief is that the artwork is not only what is happening on stage, but more importantly what audience members conjure in their minds from what they witness and take with them when they leave. More information at www.violetjuno.com.

Margit Galanter/*Relay* is fiscally sponsored by Show Box L.A., www.showboxla.org.

Thanks, You Made This *This*: To the very inspired performing artists; BAM Tuners and *Excursion*ers; the artists and thinkers, for the *encounters*; Violet Juno and Maureen Whiting whose perceptual vibrancies have helped to shape this work; Sarah Pritchard for showing up with organizational support and brilliance; Eleni Stecopoulos, insight; B. Spoke Tailor and Ashley Brock, gorgeous costume experiments; Mary Armentrout, brass tacks generosity; Micah Silver + Kadet, sounds; James Kidd, costume counsel; Chani Bockwinkel and Nicholas Komodore, photography; the videographers; Avery, archive support all along; Maryanna Lachman, town cryer; Raha Behnam, May Tulin, Lila Ann Dodge, Gretchen Till, Antonia + Marisa Leto, and Angela Hope for rocking support day of; OMNI**dance** for the possibilities; Jack Magai for creative exchange, both artistic and much more fundamental; Erin at Starline and Ellen Webb, for being sure hosts; Joe Landini/the Garage; Meg Wolfe/Showbox L.A.; Julie Tolentino + Pig Pen for a feral studio*house; Brianna Skellie, Char Salon, Pieter Performance, Daria Fain/Prosodic Body, SALTA = n/a, Jessika Kenney, Eyvind Kang, Asia Wong/The Possible, Home Theater Festival, and Seth Eisen for hosting *Relay* Tour events; beloved kin; and as ever, with love for you dear B.

Relay Encounters: Brianna Skellie, Cara Judea Alhadeff and Zazu, Carol Swann, Denise Leto, Eleni Stecopoulos, Elise Baldwin, Joan Hanna, Justin Desmangles, Kadet and Haven Kuhne, Keith Hennessy, Krista DeNio, Laura Wald, Mara Poliak, Marcia Scott, Mary Armentrout, Neil and Roger Marcus, nicholas andre sung, Nicole Piesl and Anna, Olive Blackburn, Petra Kuppers, Philip Huang, Rosemary Hannon, Seth Eisen, Tessa Wills, and Violet Juno.

Relay Tour Contributors: Alia Swersky, Andrea Mills, Anne Axtmann, Avery Hudson (in kind), B. Spoke Tailor (in kind); Becky Margulies, Beth Ahlstrand, Brenda Iijima, Carol Dvora and Rose Holmes, Cathryn Galanter and Jim Rosenfeld, Dasha Chernova, David Buuck, Dusty Sykes and Carolyn Edwards, Elisabeth Reed and Andrew Luchansky, Ellen Webb, Emily Newmann, Evie Ladin, Jen Harmon, Jen Hofer, Jessica S. Hunsington, Joan Hanna, Joe Mejia,Judy Summers, Julie Tolentino, Karen Nelson, Karen Rachels and Sandy Vaughn, Karen Sherman, Keith Hennessy, Krista Gullickson, Laressa Dickey, Laura Sedlock, Laurel McLaren, Lauren Wooley and Elise Baldwin, Lila Hurwitz, Mara Poliak, Marc Galanter, Marcia Scott, Mary Armentrout, Mary Ganzon, Mary Reich, Maryanna Lachman, Minna Harri, Olive Blackburn, Pearl Ubungen, Peggy Piacenza, Rae Diamond, SALTA (in kind), Sara Newmann, Sarah Pritchard, Seth Eisen, Sheri Cohen, Sri Louise, and Susan Matross + Peter Stack.

From A Rehearsal with
Maureen Whiting ~ ~ ~

MW: Once you get the objects, you can work form, what your dance form is. I feel like that's what the discovering is, and so if you work the form, let the questions be. Don't waste your mental energy on knowing, because that is the really fun part, what the purpose of the piece is, so if you can just figure out maybe what your physical form is, then work that.

MG: Right, stay with the piece…

MW: Stay with the piece, keep those questions, but don't go back and forth running to try to get the answers, because they will be *in the piece*… Let the piece tell you. You're on track.

Relay Bay Area Events Photo Links

Relay Encounters 2013. Seth Eisen and MG, Phillip Huang, Zazu and Cara Judea Alhadeff, Mary Armentrout.

SALTA is n/a. Photo credit Avery Hudson.

Tuning at Berkeley Art Museum. Photo credit Nicholas Komodore.

Group Encounter Photo credit Chani Bockwinkel.

Relay at the Starline Ballroom. Photo credit Chani Bockwinkel.

Relay Studio Performance. Photo credit Stacey Goodman.

Some Writings on Relay

REVIEW BY HEATHER DESAULNIERS:

http://www.criticaldance.org/2014/07/10/san-franciscobay-area-round-up-june-2014/

An unusually warm June day in the East Bay was the perfect setting for some authentic post-modern performance. The Ellen Webb Studio hosted the most recent chapter of Margit Galanter's "Relay" dance/poetry series, subtitled "Discovering New Species". Joined by guests Denise Leto and Violet Juno, it was an afternoon that reflected the vast collaborative possibilities that exist between spoken word and movement

…

Following a brief intermission, Margit Galanter took the space in the main event, "Relay: Discovering New Species". Beginning with a brief overture, Galanter sat on the side while she was read and taught a poem through the processes of sub-division and repetition. Once she had sufficiently ingested and restated the poem's text, she moved to the floor and stood behind a 'shower curtain', made of strips of paper. Here the poem organically morphed into vocal chant, then to singing and finally into dance and movement. Once Galanter had entered that final phase, she emerged from behind the curtain and began "Relay: Discovering New Species"' main choreographic episode. Like the opening poetry, this solo was a stream of phrases and images. The phrases utilized clear and purposeful choreographic tools – repetition, accumulation and acceleration. And the physical images were vast and open: encompassing arms in second position, extended grand plié in first. Galanter's genuine connection with the audience was incredibly unique. Contemporary dancers and performance artists can tend towards a detached onstage presence, or sometimes they come across as just plain angsty. As Galanter made direct, non-confrontational eye contact with the viewers, there was unabashed joy. It was such a delightful surprise. [more…].

"CREATIVE INVASIONS" BY KATE MATTINGLY:

Unpublished Response to SALTA and n/a Collaboration

http://relaydance.wordpress.com/2014/08/21/creative-invasions-salta-is-na-piece-by-kate-mattingly/

As people entered n/a gallery in February to see a performance hosted by the experimental dance collective SALTA, they were handed a sticker with one of two designs, a mountain or teardrops. Once inside the Oakland gallery — which is both an apartment and a queer contemporary art space — they wandered around the bedrooms, kitchen, living room, and bathroom. n/a is a sparse, almost entirely white space (white bed, white walls, white cabinets) that serves as both the home of multidisciplinary artist Nicholas Sung and a place for events and exhibitions.

When the crowd had reached a capacity that bordered on fire-hazard level, people were told that there would be two performances this evening and they would see only one of them. The mountain sticker people remained in the living room to watch Margit Galanter. Those with teardrop stickers entered a second bedroom to experience a performance by Tessa Wills. Both artists defy traditional definitions of dance and performance: their work is unpredictable, rigorous, and investigative. It often involves participation from audience members and presents images and questions that are jarring and thought-provoking.

Although it's nearly impossible to categorize SALTA events, one through-line of their offerings could be their rhizome-like malleability. SALTA is a collective that organizes a performance at a different location each month, and presents events that are unlike any other dance concerts, which may be why audiences keep coming back for more. Galanter adds, "the environment they create is a very happy place to show work and not feel stressed… It's very magnetic. You can see all types of work, and it is the context that gives it life. It has a real personal and interpersonal quality. Their freedom is inspiring." [more…]